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GRAY DAVIS, GOVERNOR
 MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET, SECRETARY OF BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY
 JEFF MORALES, DIRECTOR
 ROBERT W. SASSAMAN, DISTRICT 7 DIRECTOR



Inside Seven -- a District 7 Edition of the *CT News*

CALTRANS BEAUTIFIES CALIFORNIA



Caltrans' Landscape Architects William Koval, left, and Cathy Jochai, inspect graceful eucalyptus trees and a beautiful Lantana planting project at the 11th Street on-ramp to the northbound Pasadena Freeway (110) in Downtown Los Angeles.

Building, operating and maintaining California's extensive freeway system requires close attention to a vast array of elements. And one of those elements, beautification, is the focus of Caltrans' Landscape Architects and Landscape Maintenance Workers. Through partnership and teamwork, this legion of Caltrans' staff spends their time finding ways to make California's freeways and state highway system more attractive. Whether planting miles of blankets of ivy, endless fields of a variety of drought-resistant blossoms or groves of colorful-

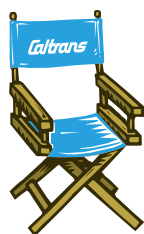
ly blooming trees, the year 'round efforts of Caltrans workers to beautify California's roadways are never-ending. And their efforts have not gone unnoticed.

Their work has been recognized and appreciated by the motoring public, as well as local communities adjacent to the freeways. Caltrans recently received a letter of appreciation from a motorist admiring their efforts and asked about the beautiful flowering trees he admired along the Foothill Freeway (210) near Pasadena (please see "Letters" column on page

seven).

The trees he inquired about are called the Floss Silk (*Chorisia speciosa*). They are one of the few trees that flower in the spring and fall. The common name comes from the silky fibers that surround the seeds within its large, woody pods. While not native to Southern California, the trees were introduced to the area from South Africa by the Los Angeles County Arboretum in Arcadia. The sturdy trees were planted as part of a project in accordance with a design by Gary

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THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR

The energy crisis is real. Governor Gray Davis has asked each state agency to reduce energy consumption by at least eight percent. Each of us at every Caltrans facility must do our part by turning out lights when not needed, making sure computers are turned off when not in use and either making joint use of personal appliances or discontinuing their usage. We all must do our best to reduce energy consumption and look for the same opportunities to save energy at home as well. While the District Office is covered by the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, the more energy we save, the more that is made available to others. Caltrans has always risen to the occasion when called upon, and I am sure each of you will do your part to help in energy conservation.

Caltrans' once strong emphasis on landscaping and beautifying our roadways unfortunately took a back seat to major construction and improvement projects on our highway system, as well as the high cost of maintaining our roadsides. Now, the current legislature has identified the need to make our roadsides look more attractive. And the efforts go beyond landscaping. Renewing our overhead and roadside signs, as well as replacing and repairing metal guardrails, also enhance our roadways. Local and private agencies as well as Cal State Fullerton and other volunteer tree planting groups have joined Caltrans offering their partic-

ipation in beautification efforts as new projects and landscaping are developed. Caltrans' Maintenance, Design, Landscape Architects and Adopt-A-Highway teams are always looking for cost-effective ways to improve our roadsides. Our cover story in this issue shows some of the beautiful end results of those efforts.

While reviewing the interesting draft Annual Report for the year 2000 and the District's accomplishments, it is a reminder that our workload is large and the innovations outstanding, as they have always been in the past. District 7 is a leader in changes and many new types of improvement projects. The report has not been finalized, but will soon be published and available to all employees. Reading about the improvement projects that we all were part of, allows reflection on the year 2000 and an opportunity to be proud of the achievements that each of us helped provide to our customers in the State of California.

Congratulations to the Maintenance Agreements Team for the recent quality award they received for their Maintenance Agreements Database (please see article on page three). The idea, created by Tom Luong, Transportation Engineer, while on rotation in Traffic Operations, was further developed when he transferred to Maintenance. This collaborative undertaking was a prime example of what quality is all about in building on each other's quality efforts. Great work!

Our new District Office Building (DOB) is on the horizon and we are looking for a move-in date of spring, 2004. To some that may seem like a long time off, but it will be here before we know it. We are still hiring new employees and the DOB is a little on the crowded side. But the wheels are in motion. During construction some changes will occur in our operations. The parking lot

will be cleared and employees will have to find parking space elsewhere. And we are still looking for additional leased space in the Downtown area. We are hopeful details will be finalized early this summer. All of these changes will provide some inconveniences, but we will work together to find parking and to make the transition as smooth as possible. It may be a good time for those who have not yet used public transit to give it a try. The good news is we are moving ahead toward our brand new facility!

During the month of February, two conferences were held at Cal State Long Beach dealing with improving goods movement in the Los Angeles area from the Ports of Long Beach and Los Angeles. The first session dealt with ideas from union members and improvements they feel can be made at the ports to help facilitate goods movement. The follow-up session was given by the shippers, owners and management of the facilities. Caltrans is a major player in this effort, as once shippers leave the ports they end up on the state highway system to distribute goods, not only in Los Angeles, but to all other parts of the country. We have within our district boundaries one of the largest port systems in the world and the main port access to the Pacific Rim for distribution throughout the United States. Goods that come in and out through our highway system are destined for other parts of the country, as well as to local California markets. These two conferences are part of a team approach in the congestion relief effort. Together, we are diligently looking at more efficient ways to utilize our highway system to help improve mobility in California. •

ROBERT W. SASSAMAN
District Director

Doug Failing Congratulated As New Chief Deputy District Director

Over 100 colleagues and friends of Doug Failing assembled January 30 for a special cake and coffee celebration to congratulate him on his recent appointment as the new Chief Deputy District Director. Failing began his career at Caltrans in 1980 as a Junior Civil Engineer in Design and remained there through his promotion to Division Chief in 1994. As Design Division Chief, Failing managed over 500 engineers and support staff responsible for delivering in excess of \$1 billion worth of transportation improvement projects.

Among Failing's past accomplishments include sound wall coordinator, as well as Caltrans' representative on the Alameda Corridor Transportation Authority Governing Board. One of his most challenging assignments throughout the years was the remarkable work related to the 1984 Northridge Earthquake, as well as the subsequent earthquake retrofit program. "Doug has his 'fingerprints' on many of the major projects in the District due to his hard work, commitment and leadership skills," said William Reagan, Office Chief, Design A. Reagan also noted that Failing is employee-oriented and maintains an open-door policy to all.

Following the earthquake, Failing was placed in the forefront of the recovery effort. He and his staff delivered major freeway rebuilding contracts in record



Colleagues offer hearty congratulations to Doug Failing. Left to right: Dick Stewart, Office Chief, Surveys North; Peter Hsu, Office Chief, Design B; Bill Reagan, Office Chief, Design A; John Iwasaki, Office Chief, Right of Way Engineering; Deborah Robertson, Division Chief, External Affairs; Robert W. Sassaman, District 7 Director; Doug Failing, Chief Deputy District Director; Jai Paul Thakur, Office Chief, Engineering Services; Bill Stewart, Office Chief, Surveys South; and Karen Fong, Office Chief, Design D.

time using an unprecedented cost-plus-time system – the first time the system had ever been used in California. "Throughout the years and some of those tough assignments, we have all learned a great deal from Doug," said Peter Hsu, Office Chief, Design B. "He is a true leader."

According to John Iwasaki, Office Chief, Right of Way Engineering, Failing is the type of manager who recognizes problems and does whatever it takes to solve them. "Doug really makes things happen," said Iwasaki. "Many of the accomplishments in my office would not have been possible without him. He is definitely the right person for his new position."

District Director Robert W. Sassaman warmly congratulated Failing on his appointment and said that he is very pleased to have him on board. "Doug's career in Design is the backbone of his experience and is a real plus for

Caltrans," said Sassaman. "He has extensive, in-depth experience and is familiar with the operations of District 7, internally as well as externally. I look forward to working with Doug and wish him the best at his new post."

At the celebration, Failing expressed appreciation to his colleagues and friends for their sincere congratulations. "I really appreciate all of you being here today and the great work you do day in and day out," he said. "I would also like to extend my appreciation to management and the executive team for all of their help, support and teamwork. This really means a lot to me. I thank you all and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future."

Caltrans applauds Doug Failing on his numerous, noteworthy contributions and accomplishments. Congratulations, Doug, on your well-deserved appointment! •

Quality Award Presented to Maintenance Agreements Team

Contributing Writer, Herby Lissade, Senior Transportation Engineer, Maintenance

A newly developed, informational Maintenance Agreements Powerpoint presentation was shown recently to Headquarters personnel. Maintenance Agreements are important because they specify the responsibilities between Caltrans and its local agency partners as they pertain to maintaining Caltrans' facilities. The agreements, which are legal

documents, are for the maintenance of state highways, Park and Ride lots and other facilities that fall within the jurisdiction of a city or local agency. Currently in District 7 there are over 350 agreements to manage.

The concept for the Powerpoint presentation was originally developed by Tom Luong, Transportation Engineer, Maintenance. Luong's idea was initially created for a freeway sign database while working in Traffic Operations. After he

rotated to Maintenance, Luong assisted a project team in identifying and developing an additional use of his idea for documenting Maintenance Agreements. Through teamwork, they identified and applied cross-applications of Luong's concept to what is now the Maintenance Agreements database.

For their efforts, Caltrans Director Jeff Morales presented the Maintenance Agreements project team with a well-

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Quality Award

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deserved Quality Achievement Award. Herby Lissade, 2000 Maintenance Agreements Supervisor, accepted the award on behalf of his project team. "I would like to express my appreciation to Mr. Morales for this important recognition," said Lissade. "And I would also like to thank the team members for their extraordinary efforts in this quality project including: Michael Miles, Tom Almany, Chuck O'Connell, Harold Madison, Rachel Partida, Richard Hung, Tom Luong and Student Assistant Irma Rivas." In addition, Luong received a Quality Achievement Award as well as a special Certificate of Appreciation. And other districts have expressed an interest in developing their own databases with his assistance.

Regularly updating Caltrans' Maintenance Agreements is part of the District's business plan. The creation of the Maintenance Agreements database will help achieve this objective. This has been made possible thanks to the empowerment of the project team and the support of the team's efforts through upper management. The database will provide instant access to the District's



On behalf of the Maintenance Agreements Team, Herby Lissade (left) accepts a quality award from Caltrans Director Jeff Morales.

Maintenance Agreements and is being implemented using existing resources. Correspondence and exhibits for those agreements will also be available on the same system. This is being accomplished with the help of the Geographical Information Systems (GIS) engineers and others. The database will eventually be merged into the District's GIS system.

The following will be found in an agreement:

- Who maintains what portion of a facility and what work is involved
- Who is accountable for maintenance of the facility
- Who pays for the maintenance of the facility

The above information as well as the Powerpoint presentation are now accessible to all Caltrans employees on the Caltrans District 7 Maintenance Intranet

site at http://10.56.22.233/programs/engineering/agreements/webpages/maintenance_agreements.htm by logging onto the Caltrans Maintenance homepage and linking to the Maintenance Agreements database (the database will also be available in compact disc format).

This technology will not only help Caltrans perform jobs better today, but will also provide a permanent record for future generations to utilize. Success of this program can be measured by the amount of time and effort saved in retrieving documents, as time has a direct impact on cost. What took two employees three hours or more to research, will now take one employee just minutes and can be queried from anywhere that the Caltrans Intranet is available.

"I am extremely proud to have developed this database," said Luong. "This team achievement is not only measured by time-savings, cost reduction and improved efficiency for documents retrieval, but also in providing extraordinary services exceeding Caltrans customers' expectations."

Lissade added, "Through the dedicated efforts of our team and by embracing the latest technology in document warehousing, Caltrans will provide better service to its partners and customers far into the next century." •

Caltrans Beautifies

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Kato, Caltrans Landscape Architect.

According to William Koval, District Landscape Architect, the single, most important factor, by far, that influences the appearance of freeway roadsides is maintenance. "Without adequate maintenance resources there is no strategy that can beautify the roadsides," said Koval. "Caltrans Landscape Architects are close partners with field Landscape Maintenance Workers in achieving a positive end result of a more attractive roadside. The Maintenance staff out there in the field doing the hard work summer, winter, spring and fall, put a lot of effort in what they do and take a lot of pride in their work. They are doing a terrific job."

Caltrans is also extremely fortunate to have partnered with volunteer tree planting groups, such as Cal State Fullerton, led by Dr. Kathleen West; Keep California



Beautiful Floss Silk trees grace California's freeways near the junction of the Pasadena Freeway (210) and Ventura Freeway (134) near Pasadena.

Beautiful; the California Master Trust; and DriWater, Inc. And the Caltrans Adopt-A-Highway program with its 60,000 volunteers statewide is committed year 'round to litter removal and beautifying

California's highways.

Strict requirements exist for plants on California's freeway system, some of which include that they be low mainte-

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Caltrans Beautifies

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nance, drought-tolerant and able to withstand a variety of soil conditions. Koval says there are very few trees and shrubs that can actually do well under the conditions that exist on the freeways. "The bonus," he said about the Floss Silk trees, "is the spectacular display of flowers twice a year." Cathy Jochai, Caltrans Landscape Associate, added, "It is the profusion of large rose-pink flowers with pale centers that impresses people, even those traveling at freeway speeds." Each orchid-like bloom is up to six inches

across. The trees lose some or all of their leaves during the late fall and winter.

In addition to the Floss Silk trees, beautiful fields of Lantana blossoms decorate many stretches of freeways and highways throughout the Southland. The small, useful blossom, while delicate in appearance, is a good soil builder, is drought-tolerant and very lovely to look at. They can be found in a variety of colors such as pink, white, yellow, orange and lavender. And they bloom year 'round. They are another lovely addition to Caltrans' ongoing efforts to beautify California. And another flowering plant, the very beautiful and hardy California Lilac, also works well along the state's freeways and highways.

The exquisite Floss Silk trees can also be seen locally on First Street near the Los Angeles County Courthouse in Downtown Los Angeles close to the Caltrans District Office Building, as well as at various locations along the freeways in Los Angeles and Ventura Counties.

While building, operating and maintaining California's extensive freeway system is paramount, it certainly is rewarding to beautify the Golden State along the way – thanks to the dedicated teamwork of Caltrans' Landscape Architects, Landscape Maintenance Workers, the Adopt-A-Highway program and caring volunteers. Keep up the beautiful work! •

Wilshire Police Council Presents Plaques Of Appreciation

In appreciation of the efforts by Caltrans in assisting the Wilshire Community Police Council in leasing Park and Ride lots for fundraising activities, the Council presented special plaques of appreciation to Right of Way personnel.

The Council is a "booster club" comprised of Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) and Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LACSD) personnel and volunteers. Caltrans' Park and Ride lots are used to hold carnivals where funds are raised for their Explorer Scouts programs.

The Explorer Scouts programs are non-profit organizations of the LAPD and LACSD for youth ages 14 through 21 interested in volunteering their time to learn about law enforcement, police functions and responsibility to their communities. The Explorer Academy is conducted at the Los Angeles Police Academy. The Council donates thousands of dollars annually to the Explorer programs.

"Assisting the Wilshire Community Police Council, the LAPD and LACSD with our Park and Ride facilities for their fundraising has been a very rewarding experience," said Jim Wright, Caltrans Right of Way Program Coordinator. "Not only does it help them raise money for a great cause, but it fosters good community relations as well."

Neil Barry, Council member, said, "On behalf of the Council, I would like to



Members of the Wilshire Police Council and Explorer Scouts present Caltrans with special plaques of appreciation.

thank Caltrans and Jim Wright for their assistance and cooperation." Barry and many other representatives from the LAPD and LACSD, were on hand for presentation of the plaques, as well as Explorer Scouts from each of the two law enforcement agencies.

"I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to the Wilshire Community Police Council, the LAPD and LACSD for the beautiful and very special awards," said Robert W. Sassaman, District

Director. The exquisite plaques will be placed on the "awards wall" just outside the elevator on the fourth floor of the District Office Building. Wright added, "I also wish to thank Alec Mardirossian, Caltrans Park and Ride Coordinator; Larry Staley, Office Chief, Right of Way; and Neil Barry for their teamwork." It is always a pleasure for Caltrans to work together in partnership with law enforcement agencies and others to help youth and the local communities. •

...RETIREE SPOTLIGHT...



Tom Almany, Office Chief, Maintenance, left, presents Dave Servaes with a special Caltrans Certificate of Appreciation at Dave's retirement for over three decades of dedicated service.

Dave Servaes, North Region Maintenance Manager, Retires

After faithfully serving Caltrans since April 21, 1969, Dave Servaes, North Region Maintenance Manager, retired recently amid a throng of well-wishers. The gathering for the farewell barbecue at the North Region Maintenance facility in Ventura included Servaes' wife Yvonne, daughter Lynette and sons Daniel and David, who helped him greet nearly 300 friends and co-workers for a joyous send-off. Representatives for local elected officials also came to wish him well.

It was in Dixon, California, where Servaes started his career in Caltrans Maintenance work over three decades ago. Throughout the years he spent time working at such locations as Vallejo, Willow Creek, Kingvale and Tarzana. In 1992 Servaes was promoted to North Region Maintenance Manager where he remained until his official retirement December 29, 2000.

Servaes' Maintenance region was responsible for many state highways hit hard during the El Niño rainstorms, including the rural Highways 33 and 150 in Ventura, and in Los Angeles where

floods damaged portions of Topanga Canyon Boulevard (27) and ravaged hill-sides along Pacific Coast Highway (PCH). Over \$70 million was spent on storm-related work by Servaes' region alone when crews worked practically around the clock. Servaes also served on the PCH Task Force with Senator Sheila Kuehl and aide Laurie Newman. Newman, who was present at the retirement, said, "We are very sorry to see Dave go. He and his crews have taken such good care of our highways. It has been great working with him." And Michael Miles, Division Chief, Maintenance, added, "It has been a real pleasure working with Dave over the years. He is a true people-person."

As Miles noted, Servaes is especially known for his fairness and compassion in dealing with people, and his no-nonsense hard-work ethics. Tom Almany, Office Chief, Maintenance, could not have summed it up better when he added, "Dave cares about people, about Caltrans and the work that we do. And he cares very much. There is no bigger advocate

for Caltrans and its employees than Dave Servaes."

Several presentations were made including those from Senator Jack O'Connell's office and the City of Simi Valley. Also presented were a special Caltrans Certificate of Recognition, a Proclamation of Appreciation for over 30 years of outstanding service to the commuters of the State of California, a special letter of appreciation from District Director Robert W. Sassaman, as well as special plaques, gifts and belt buckles given by coworkers Wayne Johnson and Glen DeSantis.

"I consider my Caltrans 'family' as part of my own family," Servaes said. "I am so proud to hear such nice things said about me. I would like to especially thank my family, as well as the Legal Department, my office staff, Wayne Johnson, the superintendents, the tree crews, Senator Sheila Kuehl's office, the City of Simi Valley, Senator O'Connell's office and all my invaluable North Region employees. Thank you all for coming and sharing this special day with me."

And a special "thank you" to Dave Servaes, for 30 years of dedicated work, compassion and faithful service to Caltrans. The very best for a wonderful and happy retirement! •

Editor's Note

Beginning this issue of *Inside Seven*, each District's printed newsletter will be distributed with Headquarters' *CT News*, the department-wide newsletter. To ensure that District newsletters are consistent in style as well as content with our department-wide newsletter, *Inside Seven* will also have a new graphic style matching that of the *CT News*. Both *Inside Seven* and the *CT News* are distributed via email to employees for your convenience. Everyone is encouraged to stay informed by reading both interesting and informative publications monthly. If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at (213) 897-3630 or via email at jeanne.bonfilio@dot.ca.gov.

JEANNE BONFILIO
Editor

Dear Caltrans:

This may seem quite trivial considering all the issues that involve our transportation system. Recently I was traveling on Interstate 210 through the Pasadena area. The freeway landscaping included some trees that are currently flowering with red/rose colored petals and white centers. They were the only flowering trees currently in bloom and were beautiful. Can anyone tell me what type of trees these were? Thanks for any help your department may be able to give.

John C. Ganahl, Esq.
Fresno

Editor's Note: Please see cover story.

Mr. Roy Pool,
East Region Maintenance Manager

Dear Mr. Pool:

I am contacting you today to offer my commendation and show my appreciation for two members of your Maintenance crew, Pamela Koons and Salvador Huerta, who both assisted me today. I was traveling on the Route 210 Freeway, westbound near the Santa Anita exit when some equipment I was transporting in my pickup truck became unsecured and landed on the freeway. The crew was nearby and offered their assistance in collecting my lost cargo and reloading my equipment onto my truck. The crew could not have been more helpful, courteous or professional. I was so impressed by your employees, I felt compelled to write and tell you so. These days it seems everyone is quick to complain but are slow to compliment, perhaps even more so when it comes to government agencies. My thanks to you and your employees for a job well done.

Bob Widders
Wildlife Waystation
Angeles National Forest

Mr. Tom Almany
Office Chief, Maintenance Support

Dear Mr. Almany:

Your staff did a great job cleaning the area west of the Westwood Transitional Village. The place looks great! Please



convey my thanks to all involved. I appreciate your help and concern.

Sincerely,
Judge Harry Pregerson
United States Court of Appeals

Dear Caltrans:

The huge scope and complexity of the Caltrans project at the Seaward off-ramp in Ventura might cause many to expect horrendous traffic jams and delays. Instead, we have been delighted with the professionalism of all of the workers controlling traffic...preventing backups and frustration to drivers. To have accomplished all of the work to date through the summer tourist season and the Ventura County Fair is astonishing. We commend you all for a job well done. Your difficult work is greatly appreciated.

John and Carmel Whitman
Ventura

Mr. Yunus Ghausi

Dear Mr. Ghausi:

I just wanted to let you know how much I appreciated your complete and valuable reply to my inquiry. You, as well as Ms. Irma Lopez and Ms. Margie Tiritilli from Public Affairs certainly left me with a very favorable impression of the competence, dedication and responsiveness of our hard-working California government officials. Again, thank you very much.

Sincerely,
Paul Maynard

Ms. Irma Lopez, Public Affairs

Dear Ms. Lopez:

This letter is to inform you that after 11 years with Thomas Bros. Maps, I have decided to take an opportunity with another company. ...I would like to personally thank you for your assistance over the years regarding the updates for your

region. It has been a pleasure working with you and I have appreciated your assistance in order to keep Thomas Bros. Maps products as current and accurate as possible.

Sincerely,
Kim A. Parry

Mr. Robert W. Sassaman

Dear Mr. Sassaman:

Recently, I needed to research what duct cells were vacant on the Brand Avenue Bridge over the Ventura Freeway (134) in Glendale. Not knowing what to do or where to start, Ronald Hogan of Microfilm Services introduced himself and asked how he could be of assistance. I explained what I needed and he immediately knew where to go. He patiently explained how to operate the microfilm viewer and said that if I needed additional assistance to ask. Ronald demonstrated a willingness to assist, for which I am grateful. He is a shining example of the meaning of excellent customer service. Please extend my "thank you" to Ronald Hogan.

Sincerely,
Don Theall, Permit Coordinator
Herman Weissker, Inc.

Mr. Robert Sassaman

Dear Mr. Sassaman:

Thank you for your prompt and detailed response to my inquiry. Who says government employees are ignorant and oblivious? My faith is restored in the future of our city and state!

Sincerely,
Jay Ross
Manhattan Beach

Larry Ornay, Special Crews Maintenance Manager

Dear Mr. Ornay and Special Crews:

I once again thank the Caltrans District 7 office for continuing the use of the solid black stripe at all semi-barrier, no-passing-zone stripes and two-way left-turn lanes. ...Keep up the good work!

Pine Hodges

